

Reference No: E109/92/84 ; **Date:** 08/12/86

Circular 28/1986:- Special leave without pay for the career breaks

A Dhuine Uasail

I am directed by the Minister for the Public Service to say that, following review of the provisions for special leave without pay for career breaks for the pilot period to 31 December 1985, agreement has been reached (General Council Report 1075) on amendments to the schemes for established and unestablished staff. It has also been agreed to re-issue the details of the schemes for the information of staff. These are set out in the attached Appendices.

2. Departments are reminded of the importance which the Government attaches to the continued promotion of the schemes in the civil service and in the state sector generally.
3. Circulars 7/84 and 7/85 are superseded by this circular.
4. Please make arrangements to bring this Circular to the attention of all staff.

Mise le meas
William P. Smith
Deputy Secretary

Appendix to Circular 28/86 (PC 98)

Scheme of special leave without pay for career breaks for established staff

Objectives

1. The objectives of the scheme are to provide new job opportunities in the civil service and to facilitate civil servants who wish to take career breaks.

Eligibility

2. Subject to what follows, all established civil servants who have satisfactorily completed their probation and who have not reached minimum retiring age may apply for special leave without pay for a career break. The duration of a career break may not extend beyond minimum retiring age. The needs of the work may require that some applications will have to be refused but staff will be facilitated as far as possible.

Duration and Purpose

3. A career break shall consist of special leave without pay for a period of not less than one year and not more than three years. The initial career break may be for a period of a year or for periods in excess of a year up to a maximum of three years. A career break may be extended in six monthly periods or in periods in excess of six months provided the total period of special leave without pay does not exceed three years in all.
4. A career break may be allowed for most purposes including further education, domestic responsibilities, starting a business or a stay abroad.

Additional Career Break

5. One additional career break may be granted provided the period of service between career breaks is equal to the duration of the initial career break, and that the total period of the special leave does not exceed three years in all.

Vacancies

6. Vacancies arising when serving officers take career breaks may be filled, as may consequential vacancies including those at recruitment level.

Non-Reckonability

7. Special leave without pay for a career break will not count as service and will not reckon for increment or superannuation or towards qualifying for annual leave or promotion.

Return to duty

8. Officers returning to the civil service after a career break will be assigned to fillable vacancies as and when they arise in their grade and Department. Some delay in returning to duty may be expected from time to time but Departments should try to minimise the waiting period.

Applications

9. Application for special leave should be made to the Head of the Department in which the officer is serving and should state the purpose of the career break and the period of time for which it is sought.

10. During the pilot period of the scheme, agreement was reached with the Staff Side on the following items and Personnel Officers informed accordingly. The dates of the relevant letters to Personnel Officers are shown in brackets:

- (1) Promotion arrangements for an officer on a career break (9 January 1985).
- (2) Employment of an officer on a career break on a consultancy basis in the civil service (22 March 1985).
- (3) Procedure for follow up of an officer due to return from a career break (12 June 1985).
- (4) Transfer arrangements arising from the filling of career break vacancies in provincial areas (13 July 1984; 12 June 1985).
- (5) Operation of central transfer arrangements (13 July 1984; 12 June 1985; 12 March 1986).

11. Personal enquiries about this Circular should be made to the Personnel Unit of the employing Department.

12. Returns of all applications for career breaks should be made to this Department every three months. (30 April, 31 July, 31 October, 31 January).

This Circular has been superceded by Circular 18/98.